

A GREAT CONSPIRACY.

Dark Plotting Which Led to the Assassination of Lincoln.

Booth's Three Schemes—How the Assassin Chose His Fellows—Mrs. Surratt's Part—The Tragedy and the Consequences—A Dramatic Narrative.

"John Wilkes Booth was the projector of the plot against the President which culminated in the taking of that good man's life. He had rolled under his tongue the sweet paragraphs of Shakspeare referring to Brutus, as his father had so well, that the old man named one son Junius Brutus and the other John Wilkes, after the wild English agitator, until it became his ambition, like the wicked Lorenzo de Medici, to stake his life upon one stroke for fame, the murder of a ruler obnoxious to the South.

"Booth shrank at first from murder until another and less dangerous resolution failed. This was no less than the capture of the President's body, and its detention or transportation to the South. I do not rely for this assertion upon his sealed letter, where he avows it; there has been found upon a street within the city limits a house belonging to one Mrs. Greene, mined and furnished with underground apartments, furnished with manacles, and all the accessories to private imprisonment. Here the President, and as many as could be gagged and conveyed away with him, were to be concealed, in the event of failure to run them into the Confederacy. Owing to his failure to group around him as many men as he desired, Booth abandoned the project of kidnapping, but the house was discovered, as represented, ready to be blown up at a moment's notice.

"It was at this time that Booth devised his triumphal route through the South. The dramatic element seems to have been never lacking in his design, and with all his base purposes he never failed to consider some subsequent notoriety to be enjoyed. He therefore shipped, before the end of 1861, his theatrical wardrobe from Canada to Nassau. After the commission of his crime he intended to reclaim it, and 'star' through the South, drawing many as much by his crime as his abilities.

"When Booth began, on his own responsibility, to hunt for accomplices, he found his theory at fault. The bold men he had dreamed of refused to join him in the rash attempt at kidnapping the President, and were too conscientious to meditate murder. All those who presented themselves were military men, unwilling to be subordinate to a civilian and a mere play-actor, and the mortified bravo found himself, therefore, compelled to sink to a petty rank in the plot or to make use of base and despicable assistants. His vanity found it easier to compound with the second alternative than the first.

"Here began the first resolve, which, in its mere animal state, we may name courage. Booth found that a tragedy in real life could no more be enacted without greasy-faced and knock-kneed supernumeraries than upon the mimic stage. Your 'First Citizen,' who swings a stave for Marc Antony, and drinks hard porter behind the flies, is very like the bravo of real life who murders between his cock-tails at the nearest bar. Wilkes Booth had passed the ordeal of a garlicky green-room, and did not shrink from the broader and ranker green-room of real life. He assembled around him, one by one, the cut-throats at whom his soul would have re-

volted except that he had become by resolve a cut-throat in himself.

"About this time certain gentlemen in Canada began to be unenviably known. I make no charges against those whom I do not know, but simply say that the Confederate agents, Jacob Thompson, Larry McDonald, Clement Clay, and some others, had already accomplished enough villainy to make Wilkes Booth, on the first of the present year, believe that he had but to seek an interview with them.

"He visited the provinces once certainly, and three times it is believed, stopping in Montreal at St. Lawrence Hall, and banking four hundred and fifty-five dollars odd at the Ontario Bank. This was his own money. I have myself seen his bank-book with the single entry of this amount. It was found in the room of Atzeroth at Kirkwood's Hotel.

"Some one or all of these agents furnished Booth with a murderer—the fellow Wood, or Payne, who stabbed Mr. Seward and was caught at Mrs. Surratt's house in Washington. He was one of three Kentucky brothers, all outlaws, and had himself, it is believed, accompanied one of his brothers, who is known to have been at St. Albans on the day of the bank delivery. This Payne, besides being positively identified as the assassin of the Swards, had no friends nor haunts in Washington. He was simply a dispatched murderer, and after the night of the crime struck northward for the frontier, instead of southward in the company of Booth. The proof of this will follow in the course of the article.

"Half applauded, half rebuffed by the rebel agents in Canada, Booth's impressions of his visit were just those which would whet him soonest for the tragedy. His vanity had been fed by the assurance that success depended upon himself alone, and that as he had the responsibility he would absorb the fame; and the method of correspondence was of that dark and mysterious shape which powerfully operated upon his dramatic temperament.

"What could please an actor, and the son of an actor, better than to mingle as a principal in a real conspiracy, the aims of which were pseudo-patriotic, and the ends so astounding that at its coming the whole globe would reel. Booth reasoned that the ancient world would not feel more sensitively the death of Julius Cesar than the new the sudden taking off of Abraham Lincoln.

"And so he grew into the idea of murder. It became his business thought. It was his recreation and his study. He had not worked half so hard for histrionic success as for his terrible graduation into an assassin. He had fought often on the boards and had seen men die in well-imitated horror, with flowing blood upon the keen sword's edge, and the strong stride of mimic victory with which he flourished his weapon at the closing of the curtain. He embraced conspiracy like an old diplomatist, and found in the woman and the spot subjects for emulation.

"Southeast of Washington stretches a tapering peninsula, composed of four fertile Counties, which at the remote tip make Point Lookout, and do not contain any town within them of more than a few hundred inhabitants. Tobacco has ruined

the land of these, and slavery has ruined the people. Yet in the beginning they were of that splendid stock of Calvert and Lord Baltimore, but retain to-day only the religion of the peaceful founder.

"The country immediately outside of the District of Columbia to the south is named Prince George's, and the pleasantest village of this County, close to, Washington, is called Surrattsville. This consists of a few cabins at a cross-roads, surrounding a fine old hotel, the master whereof, giving the settlement his name, left the property to his wife, who for a long time carried it on with indifferent success. Having a son and several daughters, she moved to Washington soon after the beginning of the war, and left the tavern to a trusty friend—one John Lloyd. Surrattsville has gained nothing in patronage or business from the war, except that it became at an early date a rebel postoffice. The great secret mail from Matthias Creek, Virginia, to Port Tobacco, struck Surrattsville, and thence headed off to the east of Washington, going meanderingly north. Of this post route Mrs. Surratt was a manageress; and John Lloyd, when he rented her hotel, assumed the responsibility of looking out for the mail, as well as the duty of making Mrs. Surratt at home when she chose to visit him.

"So Surrattsville, only 10 miles from Washington, has been throughout the war a seat of conspiracy. It was like a suburb of Richmond, reaching quite up to the rival Capital; and though the few Unionists on the peninsula knew its reputation well enough, nothing of the sort came out until after the murder.

"Treason never found a better agent than Mrs. Surratt. She was a large, masculine, self-possessed female, mistress of her house, and as like a rebel as Belle Boyd or Mrs. Greensborough. She had not the flippancy and menace of the first, nor the social power of the second; but the rebellion has found no fitter agent.

"At her country tavern and Washington home, Booth was made welcome, and there began the muttered murder against the Nation and mankind.

"The acquaintance of Mrs. Surratt in Lower Maryland undoubtedly suggested to Booth the route of escape, and made him known to his subsequent accomplices. Last Fall he visited the entire region, as far as Leonardtown, in St. Mary's County, professing to buy land, but really making himself informed upon the rebel post stations, with all the leading affiliations upon whom he could depend. At this time he bought a map, a fellow to which I have seen among Atzeroth's effects, published at Buffalo for the rebel Government, and marking at hap-hazard all the Maryland villages, but without tracing the high-roads at all. The absence of these roads, it will be seen hereafter, very nearly misled Booth during his crippled flight.

"When Booth cast around him for assistants, he naturally selected those men whom he could control. The first that recommended himself was one Harold, a youth of insane and plastic character, carried away by the example of an actor, and full of execrable quotations, going to show that he was an imitator of the master spirit, both in text and admiration. This Harold was a gunner, and therefore versed in arms; he had traversed the whole lower portion of Maryland, and was therefore a geographer as well as a tool. His friends lived at every farm-house between Washington and Leonardtown, and he was respectfully enough connected, so as to make his association creditable as well as useful.

"Young Surratt does not appear to have been a puissant spirit in the scheme; indeed, all design and influence therein was absorbed by Mrs. Surratt and Booth. The latter was the head and heart of the plot; Mrs. Surratt was his anchor, and the rest of the boys were disciples to Iscariot and

Jezebel. John Surratt, a youth of strong Southern physiognomy, beardless and lanky, knew of the murder and connived at it. 'Sam' Arnold and one McLaughlin were to have been parties to it, but backed out in the end. They all relied upon Mrs. Surratt, and took their 'cues' from Wilkes Booth.

"The conspiracy had its own time and kept its own counsel. Murder, except among the principals, was seldom mentioned except by genteel implication. But they all publicly agreed that Mr. Lincoln ought to be shot, and that the North was a race of fratricides. Much was said of Brutus, and Booth repeated heroic passages, to the delight of Harold, who learned them also, and wondered if he was not born to greatness.

"In this growing darkness, where all rehearsed cold-hearted murder, Wilkes Booth grew great of stature. He had found a purpose consonant with his evil nature and bad influence over weak men; so he grew moodier, more vigilant, more plausible. By mien and temperament he was born to handle a stiletto. We have no face so markedly Italian; it would stand for Cesar Borgia any day in the year. All the rest were swayed or persuaded by Booth; his schemes were three in order:

"1st. To kidnap the President and Cabinet, and run them South or blow them up.

"2d. Kidnaping failed, to murder the President and the rest, and seek shelter in the Confederate Capital.

"3d. The rebellion failed, to be its avenger and throw the country into consternation, while he escaped by the unfrequented parts of Maryland.

"When this last resolution had been made, the plot was both contracted and extended. There were made two distinct circles of confidants—those aware of the meditated murder, and those who might shrink from murder, though willing accessories for a lesser object. Two colleagues for blood were at once accepted, Payne and Atzeroth.

"The former I have sketched; he is believed to have visited Washington once before, at Booth's citation; for the murder was at first fixed for the day of inauguration. Atzeroth was a fellow of German descent, who had led a desperate life at Port Tobacco, where he was a house-painter. He had been a blockade-runner across the Potomac, and a mail-carrier. When Booth and Mrs. Surratt broke the design to him, with a suggestion that there was wealth in it, he embraced the offer at once, and bought a dirk and pistol. Payne also came from the North to Washington, and, as fate would have it, the President was announced to appear at Ford's Theater in public. Then the resolve of blood was reduced to a definite moment.

"On the night before the crime Booth found one on whom he could rely. John Surratt was sent northward by his mother on Thursday. Sam Arnold and McLaughlin, each of whom was to kill a Cabinet officer, grew pigeon-livered and ran away. Harold, true to his partiality, lingered around Booth to the end; Atzeroth went so far as to take his knife and pistol to Kirkwood's, where President Johnson was stopping, and hid them under the bed. But either his courage failed, or a trifling accident deranged his plan. But Payne, a professional murderer, stood 'game,' and fought his way over prostrate figures to the sick victim's bed. There was great confusion and terror among the tacit and rash conspirators on Thursday night. They had looked upon the plot as of a melodrama, and found to their horror that John Wilkes Booth meant to do murder.

"Six weeks before the murder, young John Surratt had taken two splendid repeating carbines to Surrattsville, and told John Lloyd to secrete them. The latter made a hole in the wainscoting and suspended them from strings, so that they fell

within the plastered wall of the room below. On the very afternoon of the murder, Mrs. Surratt was driven to Surrattsville, and she told John Lloyd to have the carbines ready, because they would be called for that night. Harold was made quartermaster, and hired the horses. He and Atzeroth were mounted between 8 o'clock and the time of the murder, and riding about the streets together.

"The whole party was prepared for a long ride, as their spurs and gauntlets show. It may have been their design to ride in company to the Lower Potomac, and by their numbers exact subsistence and transportation.

"Lloyd, I may interpolate, ordered his wife, a few days before the murder, to go on a visit to Allen's Fresh. She says she does not know why she was so sent away, but swears that it is so. Harold, three weeks before the murder, visited Port Tobacco, and said that the next time the boys heard of him he would be in Spain; he added that with Spain there was no extradition treaty. He said at Surrattsville that he meant to make a barrel of money, or his neck would stretch.

"Atzeroth said that if he ever came to Port Tobacco again he would be rich enough to buy the whole place.

"Wilkes Booth told a friend to go to Ford's on Friday night and see the best acting in the world.

"At Ford's Theater, on Friday night, there were many standers in the neighborhood of the door, and along the dress circle in the direction of the private box where the President sat.

"The play went on pleasantly, though Mr. Wilkes Booth, an observer of the audience, visited the stage and took note of the position: His alleged associate, the stage-carrier, then received quiet orders to clear the passage by the wings from the prompter's post to the stage door. All this time, Mr. Lincoln, in his family circle, unconscious of the death that crowded fast upon him, witnessed the play and smiled, and felt heartfelt of gentleness.

"Suddenly there was a murmur near the audience door, as of a man speaking above his bound. He said:

"'Nine o'clock and forty-five minutes!'

"These words were reiterated from mouth to mouth until they passed the theater door, and were heard upon the sidewalk.

"Directly a voice cried, in the same slightly raised monotone—

"'Nine o'clock and fifty minutes!'

"This also passed from man to man, until it touched the street like a shudder.

"'Nine o'clock and fifty-five minutes!' said the same relentless voice, after the next interval, each of which narrowed to a lesser span the life of the good President.

"Ten o'clock here sounded, and conspiring echo said in reverberation—

"'Ten o'clock!'

"So, like a creeping thing, from lip to lip went—

"'Ten o'clock and five minutes!'

"An interval.

"'Ten o'clock and ten minutes!'

"At this instant Wilkes Booth appeared in the door of the theater, and the men who had repeated the time so faithfully and so ominously, scattered at his coming as at some warning phantom.

"All this is so dramatic that I fear to excite a laugh when I write it. But it is true and proven, and I do not say it, but report it.

"All evil deeds go wrong. While the click of the pistol, taking the President's life, went like a pang through the theater, Payne was spilling blood in Mr. Seward's house from threshold to sick-chamber. But Booth's broken leg delayed him or made him lose his general calmness, and he and Harold left Payne to his fate."

[The above narrative is an extract from the book, "Secret Service," by Gen. Lafayette C. Baker, which we offer as a premium. See page 8.]

"Westward the Course of Empire."

"W. of the East," said a New York man, "do not appreciate how the country has spread, as a result of the war with Spain, as our fellow-citizens in the West appreciate it. I was in the office of my hotel, near the counter, when a new arrival wrote his name and town and said he wanted a front room with a private bath. My business keeps me on the alert for people who live beyond the Mississippi, and as soon as I could do so with propriety I looked at the register and saw that the new arrival was from Helena, Mont. Then I made my advances by asking him how business was in the West. At that he flared and asked:

"How do you know where I am from—what makes you think I am from the West?"

"I explained that I had looked at the register, and in order to appease any suspicion on his part that I had a gold brick to dispose of I handed him my card and apologized, for when you have done that to a Western man he is yours.

"But I am not from the West," he protested.

"You are from Montana? I asked.

"That's what, but you don't call Montana the West, I reckon," he replied with a combination of Southern and Western accent.

"I said as mildly as I could that it was so classified in the geography I knew and so regarded by people in the East.

"Not since the war," he replied.

"For a moment I did not know where I was 'at.' But he came to my relief:

"I reckon you know we've recently took the Sandwich Islands in out of the wet?"

"I acquiesced with proper American pride.

"I reckon you know about that other island, Luzon, or whatever they call it? That's just as good as ours as long as Dewey's there."

"I followed him in his enthusiasm, for it was infectious, and I assented.

"Well, then," he asserted as a clincher, "if you want to know how business is in the West, you had better call up Honolulu or Manila. Strikes me, if there was no mistake made by Dewey—and I don't think there was—that Helena, Mont., comes pretty high being in the middle of the United States as they lay at the present writing."

Hawaiian Girls. Cincinnati Enquirer.

The jolly Hawaiian maid cannot be called good-looking, but she has pleasant features. She is good-tempered, light-hearted and pleasure-loving. She is usually of good height and has a well-developed figure. Her skin is of a reddish-brown color, and her hair is black. She is by nature imitative, so it has been very easy for her to gain knowledge from her surroundings and from coming in contact with white people.

For some years past Hawaiian girls have been educated in the Government schools, provided at different places throughout the islands. The English language is usually taught. In fact, the Hawaiian language is dying out. There are now but three Hawaiian schools upon the island.

The chief talent possessed by the Hawaiian girl is for music. Many of the natives have composed very pretty songs. The ex-Queen possesses considerable musical ability, and some Hawaiian songs and instrumental pieces composed by her had quite a vogue on the island. It has been prophesied that Hawaiian music will become a fad, for the native songs are plaintive and weird. These will no doubt be heard at the meetings of folk-lore societies next winter.

Taxes in the Philippines. The Bazar.

In the Philippine Islands, under Spanish rule, all males over 21 years of age must pay a poll tax that equals about \$4 of our money, and the women must pay \$3. A man must pay a license to sell coconuts from his own trees or indigo of his own raising. Every article of furniture that costs half a sovereign is taxed. The curtain never goes up at the theater unless \$2 is paid to the Government, and for every act of slaughtering his own animals, clipping his own sheep, or felling his own trees, the Philippine farmer must pay a fee to the Government. There is exacted Government tribute for getting married and for getting buried, and at every step and turn of his life the tax collector holds out his hand to him, and it is not a demand that can be refused. No wonder Spain wishes to keep a possession that yields such a return; no wonder also that the last 60 years have developed 17 rebellions in the Philippines.

Truth. Truth.

"What do you think of my husband's poems, Professor?"

"I think they will be read when those of Milton and Longfellow are forgotten."

"How nice of you! But you are saying that only to please me, I'm afraid."

"Nay, madam, I do but speak the simple truth."

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